

7 July 2014

The Hon. Minister Steve Thomson
Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
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The Hon. Minister Mary Polak
Environment
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Dear Ministers

Re: Marine Planning Partnership for the North Pacific Coast (MaPP)

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us on June 12th in Vancouver. We very much appreciated the opportunity to discuss the MaPP process.

Our key message is strong support for the multi-stakeholder MaPP process and plans. MaPP is a world leading initiative that helps your government to demonstrate a balance between your development agenda with a conservation and sustainability agenda for the North Coast region of British Columbia. We congratulate you for the collaborative partnership that you have forged with First Nations in the region, and look forward to celebrating the signing of the final plans early this fall, and working with you to ensure their timely and effective implementation.

1 - Completing the Plans

We understand from our meeting that you and your staff are very busy reviewing the comments that have been made on the subregional plans. We are very pleased to hear that the plans generated such an impressive level of interest from stakeholders and the public.

While we understand that you will be having further discussions with the federal government about the final plans prior to announcing their completion, we are concerned about potential delays. It is our understanding that you and the federal government addressed issues of overlapping jurisdiction prior to the draft plans being released, and that the Province and First Nations placed any issues that touched on federal jurisdiction in plan appendices. The plans are very clear that they do not intrude on federal jurisdiction,¹ and we believe they are an important input into the next step in the joint Canada-BC MPA network planning process, rather than an attempt to pre-empt that process as some sectors have suggested.

We urge you to take leadership and not delay the completion of the MaPP plans, as this risks losing goodwill and support from participating stakeholders and coastal communities. We also urge you to begin planning back from a realistic and scheduled "podium" date, as another way to ensure that all tasks are completed on time.

2 - Improving Protection levels in the Plans

A key goal for MaPP is to contribute to robust conservation outcomes through shared recommendations for an effective MPA network. Notwithstanding our strong support for

¹ See for example, the Regional Priorities Plan, v.3, lines 141-143: "The plan does not provide, imply direction or make recommendations on matters the Province believes are solely within federal jurisdiction including marine transportation, federal aquaculture licenses, or fisheries management."

the process and the resulting plans, we must point out that a balance of development and conservation has not yet been achieved in the plans, given that 85% of the region remains open to a variety of uses, and only about 15% is being recommended overall for protection in the MaPP region. We point out the extensive scientific literature on the benefits of marine protected areas, for both biodiversity and a healthy marine economy, especially for local communities, recreation and tourism, and healthy fisheries. The conservation sector has provided extensive comments on the plans, including recommendations for opportunities to improve on the proposed protection zones in the plans.

We request that you give serious consideration to protecting additional areas of ecological significance in these zones, recognizing that this will continue to enhance the areas outside of these zones.

3 – IUCN Protected Area Categories

We are pleased to see that since our meeting, that you have released the Canada-BC MPA network strategy. We note that articulating IUCN categories for MPAs is a commitment in the strategy, and urge you to retain the IUCN categories recommended for protection zones in the MaPP plans. The specification of these categories in the plans was developed and agreed to by all sectors at the subregional planning tables, and clearly demonstrates the level of protection and types of uses that should be considered through the future Canada-BC MPA network development process. IUCN categories are the appropriate designations for governments to use in establishing MPAs, and we strongly support the use of this common language to describe these areas. We note that the MaPP Protection Management Zones meet the globally accepted definition of protected areas as defined by the IUCN², and as such, believe these categories are the best way to describe the zones. Changing the categories at this point would undermine the stakeholder engagement and overall process.

We urge you to retain the IUCN categories in the plans for clarity, consistency with the common language of protected areas, and to maintain the MaPP’s process integrity.

4 – Plan Implementation

The opportunity to achieve a balance between development, conservation and sustainability hinges on your leadership in implementing the plans. Without plan implementation, BC’s natural bounty which supports livelihoods in coastal communities and profits of international companies, will degrade to the point where these are no longer lucrative.

Given all the dedicated work by provincial and First Nations staff, as well as stakeholders and communities in the development of these world-leading plans, it is critical that the Province and First Nations leadership develop an inclusive and effective implementation plan that includes funding, a dedicated new provincial marine team with MaPP implementation evident in their Service plans and internal training curricula, and a strategy for stakeholder and community involvement. When the plans are ratified, they should

² “A protected area is a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.” *Guidelines for Applying the IUCN Protected Area Management categories to Marine Protected Areas*, IUCN, 2008.

provide guidance in your areas of jurisdiction, and your government will be able to act immediately in those areas. While there are opportunities for a private-public partnership for implementation, this requires a provincial commitment to funding paired with these other core elements of provincial leadership. We urge you to ensure that provincial funding and staff are in place as soon as possible.

4 – Great Bear Sea campaign

As we mentioned at our meeting, we have launched a public campaign to generate support for the marine planning process, through our “Protect the Great Bear Sea” campaign. We hope that you have noticed the billboards, buses, bus shelters, and social media, and that you are receiving positive messages from the public about the importance of developing and implementing a marine plan for this region.

Our organizations are committed to seeing the plans completed and implemented and would like to offer our ongoing support to you in the process. Please let us know how we can help you implement these important plans that will guide the future of north coast of BC.

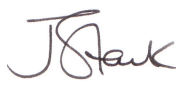
The conservation sector shares a strong commitment to ecosystem based management and spatial management, and the integration of MaPP with other ocean planning processes including bioregional MPA network planning and PNCIMA; ultimately we believe that full integration of all these marine planning initiatives is the right way to advance ecological integrity and socio-economic wellbeing.

As you ready the plans for implementation, we will request a meeting again in the future to understand the progress you have made on our requests.

Sincerely



Sabine Jessen
Canadian Parks and
Wilderness Society



Jodi Stark
David Suzuki
Foundation



Morag Carter
Living Oceans
Society



Linda Nowlan
World Wildlife Fund
Canada

- cc. The Hon. John Rustad, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
The Hon. Gail Shea, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Randy Kamp, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Matthew King, Deputy Minister, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Susan Farlinger, Regional Director General, Pacific Region, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Art Sterritt, Executive Director, Great Bear Initiative
Dallas Smith, President, Nanwakolas
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Wes Shoemaker, Deputy Minister, Environment